2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

e. Women's work.

462 The women are constantly working. Getting up at cock-crow they pound paddy. When
• 512 day dawns, they plaster the court-yard with cowdung. Thereupon they draw and fetch
262 water. They next give the gruel that is left from the previous day to the men and children. When these have eaten, they themselves take food. Thereupon they make up fire and put the midday meal food on the fire; they cook the rice, make curry; they pin leaf-cups and leaf-plates, ladle out the cooked rice, and when it becomes noon, they give the men and children their midday meal and afterwards eat themselves. From noon to the second
[283] time for drawing water (about 5 p. m.) they do different kinds of work, pluck vegetables, fetch leaves, and if they live near a forest, they go to fetch firewood, or they clear out the cotton seed in the *carkhi*[6], they clean the cotton with a bow[7], they make rolls of carded cotton on twigs, they spin on the spinning wheel, they wind the thread on their fingers, that the men may afterwards use it when weaving cloth. When it becomes the second time for drawing water, they go to fetch water, and then make preparations for the evening meal. Some two hours after it has become dark they eat. The women eat after the others. Meat they (i. e., all Santals) eat only now and then, mostly they eat
[263] cooked rice with vegetables and split peas. The spices for meat are turmeric, Anis seed, garlic, oil, and salt. The spices for fish are turmeric and *mithi*[8], and oil and salt; for vegetables and split peas only salt. They talk together about different matters while inside, thereupon they lie down to sleep. At the time of sowing and harvesting the women plant rice, hoe the maize, and when the paddy is ripe, they reap it. At the time of Dasae they make the house and door smooth: so there, this is the work of the women.

f. Children's work and amusements.

857 Until they are able to tend cattle, small boys only run about and play. When they be-
233 come fit for being cattle-herds, they tend cattle, also sheep and goats, together with the other village boys. In the morning they let the cattle out, and they tend them, two or
[234] three companions going together. They blow the flute, they hunt birds. At noon they
[223] take the cattle to a place where they rest, that they may themselves get food. When they
234 have eaten, they drive the cattle out to graze, and when it becomes evening, they bring the cattle to the village and take them in. At noon grown-up people milk the cows; they give the milk to the children; what is left they keep and add to it day after day and make clarified butter of it. To make clarified butter they boil the milk; having boiled it they let it become curds; these they churn mixed with water; thereupon they skim off the

[6] See Dictionary s. v. [7] This bow is now fairly rare. It is made of bamboo; at one end, the end kept in the right hand, it is compact; the rest is split and bent and a catgut string is fixed so as to make it a bow. It is worked putting the bow-string down in the cotton and "playing" this with the thumb and index-finger of the left hand. [8] Trigonella Foenum-Graecum, L.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
[P63]

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC LIFE

The Santal traditions are silent as to whether Thàkur Jiu, after Man's first lapse at Khòj kaman, pronounced a curse on them that out of the sweat of their brow shall they earn their bread as on their Biblical prototype, but had He done so, it would have thrown some light on the strenuous struggle for existence of the Santal in this mundane world. Food, drink, shelter and the luxury of a fire have remained to this day as objects of man's instinctive worldly cravings, and Santals though no exception to the general rule, and while feeling the pinch like others, try to hide everything under a smile.

In this chapter, we propose to give the reader some idea of the material culture of the Santal on the basis of our enquiries in a number of villages in the state of Mayurbhanj[1].

The first item in the daily routine of the men is to rise from their sleep with the first grey of morning. They then have a wash and may indulge in a smoke of "puṅgis" (*a home-made cigarette made of sal-leaves*). Now their fields call them, and on they

[1] The villages visited were Katsirsi, Andharia, Tursibani, Tentulbati (Muruda) and Tikaripara (Rairangpur).

3s Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

go with their cattle to look after their agriculture. It is about 9 a.m. that they can think of a breakfast, when the women convey to the fields a plate of "Bàsiàm damari" (*rice soaked in water and kept overnight*) which they eat with relish with a pinch of salt and some "sang" (*fried leaves*) generally of "sajina" leaves. Now refreshed with a meal, they work on till midday. The women are in the meantime busy with the hearth, cook and clean the yards and houses with cow-dung. The men return from the fields at noon and bathe and eat their noon-day meal, again of soaked rice and "sang." Now the women can think of their food and this they take after a bath and after the men have dined, exactly like their Hindu sisters. It is now time for men to take some rest. They loll on "parkòms" (*stringed bed-steads*) and doze for a time and are off to their fields at about 2 p.m. in the afternoon. There they dig, plough or sow till 4 p.m., and after returning from the fields go round the villages, visiting friends or indulge themselves in village sports. Meanwhile, their wives cook their supper, draw water and husk paddy and again at about 5-30 p.m., the family take dinner, the same menu being repeated. The children are fed first, the men next, the women, last of all.

With evening, the Santals as a tribe shut themselves indoors. If you ask them, "Why do you retire so early?" They will perhaps answer with a bland

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

smile, "O, there are the "Bongas" (*evil-spirits, deities*)." Thus finishes the daily routine of their lives.

The annual round of their life is a string of agricultural activities, working as day-labourers when there is no work to do at home, tribal feasts at the Holy-grove of the village or at the house of the Headman or other villagers, ceremonial hunts as during the "Baha" (*Flower-festival*), dances enmasse during the tribal festivities or at moon-lit nights and fish-gathering on a quest of joy and food combined.

And in between, if there is any leisure time they spend it in gathering fruit, making nets and in occasional hunts to the neighbouring forests and indulge in the delights of the chase of their primitive semi-hunting life.

Santal Cottages

Typical Santal cottages almost invariably stand on both sides of a straggling "kulhi," (*village lane*) where pigs squeal and fowls flutter about.

Each cottage is a two or three-roomed affair. On the floor corn is strewn for being aired. The plinth made of mud, rises one to three cubits high, the average being a cubit and half. It is beautifully blackened with a dye made of burnt straw plastered with cow-dung. The walls of the houses are made of bamboos or "sal" logs and are generally plastered